

Posted: _____

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Kremmling Field Office
P.O. Box 68
Kremmling, CO 80459**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-120-2009-0037-EA

PROJECT NAME: Renewal of Livestock Grazing Permits Kathleen Moore #0500149 and Willford Ranches #0501824.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered land includes all or part of the following:

07119 (Independence)
T. 11 N., R. 80 W., Sec 20, 21, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34
T. 10 N., R. 80 W., Sec 3, 4

07093 (Spring Creek)
T. 8 N., R. 78 W., Sec 19, 20, 29, 30, 31, 32
T. 8 N., R. 79 W., Sec 24
T. 7 N., R. 78 W., Sec 5, 6

07094 (Leatherman Place)
T. 8 N., R. 78 W., Sec 20

APPLICANTS: Willford Ranches & Kathleen Moore

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION: Kathleen Moore's grazing permit # 0500149 that authorizes grazing on allotments 07093 (Spring Creek) and 07094 (Leatherman Place) and Willford Ranch's permit #0501824 for allotments 07093 (Spring Creek) and Independence Mountain (07191) expire on February 28, 2009. Kathleen Moore and Willford Ranches have applied to renew their livestock grazing permits. The permits are subject to renewal at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior for a period of up to 10 years. Renewal of these livestock grazing permits would allow them to continue grazing on their designated allotments for a period of 10 years beginning on March 1, 2009.

Background/Introduction/Issues and Concerns:

During the 1999 permit renewal process, it was determined that 1583 acres were not achieving Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado (Standards) due to livestock in allotment 07093. During the 1999 allotment assessments, 1338 acres were determined to not be achieving Standards for allotment 07191. Allotment 07094 was not assessed for Standards because it is a custodial allotment with no known resource concerns or problems.

Currently, Moore and Willford livestock grazing allotment 07093 is common. This allows both permittees to share the allotment using a rotational grazing system using 4 pastures. This system allows both operators to keep their livestock separate from each other but share the allotment and pastures. All other allotments are permitted to only one of the operators.

Since 1999, development of range improvements has occurred in allotments 07093 and 07191. These projects include spring re-developments and internal fence construction.

Allotment 07093 was again assessed for standards in 2006. The allotment was noted as meeting Standards. Concerns about the common use and the Windmill pasture receiving grazing use two times every five years were discussed. Allotment 07191 was also assessed for compliance for Standards in June 2006. During the assessment, the allotment was determined to be meeting the standards however much of the area was “functioning at risk”. Allotment 07094 was not assessed for Standards because it is a low priority allotment with no known resource concerns or problems.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Proposed Action: The Proposed Action would renew the livestock grazing permits for Kathleen Moore #0500149 and Willford Ranches #0501824 and implement a new grazing system for allotments 07191 and 07093.

- The permit would be renewed for 10-years (through February 28, 2019).
- The Standard Terms and Conditions are included in Attachment #2.
- There would be no change in AUMs.
- The season of use on allotment 07093 for Willford Ranches would be increased 45 days to provide flexibility. The season of use would also be changed by 10 days for Kathleen Moore to adjust to their preferred grazing season.
- Grazing plans would be implemented for allotment 7093 which would split the pastures providing Willford Ranches with two pastures and Moore Ranches with two pastures.
- A grazing plan would also be implemented for allotment 07191.
- Conversion to yearling use would be authorized at a rate, not to exceed 1.5 yearlings per cow

The renewed livestock grazing permit would authorize grazing to the following extent for livestock grazing permit #0500149 (Kathleen Moore):

Allotment	Livestock		Season of Use		% Public Land*	AUMs**
	Number	Kind	Begin	End		
Spring Creek 07093	200	C	6/11	7/12	67	142
Leatherman Place 07094	20	C	6/01	9/30	100	80

*% Public Land is the percentage of forage within the public land (BLM) portion of the allotment.

**AUM = animal unit month = amount of forage required to support 1 cow and calf for 1 month.

The proposed grazing system for allotment 07093 would rotate livestock through 3 pastures (2 BLM and 1 State) yearly.

Total AUMs that would be authorized for this permit is 222.

The renewed livestock grazing permit would authorize grazing to the following extent for livestock grazing permit #0501824 (Willford Ranches):

Allotment	Livestock		Season of Use		% Public Land*	AUMs**
	Number	Kind	Begin	End		
Spring Creek 07093	77	C	6/11	9/1	100	210
Independence Mtn 07191	111	C	5/21	10/15	45	243

*% Public Land is the percentage of forage within the public land (BLM) portion of the allotment.

**AUM = animal unit month = amount of forage required to support 1 cow and calf for 1 month.

The proposed grazing system for allotment 07093 would rotate livestock through two BLM pastures.

The proposed grazing system for allotment 07191 would rotate livestock through five pastures. Most years 1 pasture would be rested.

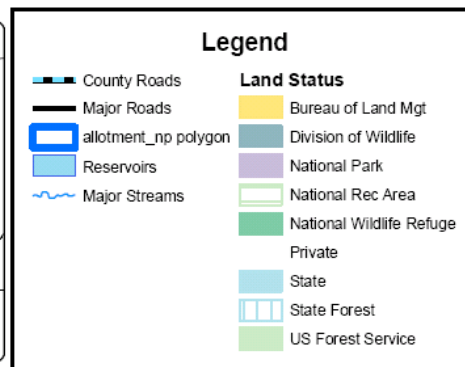
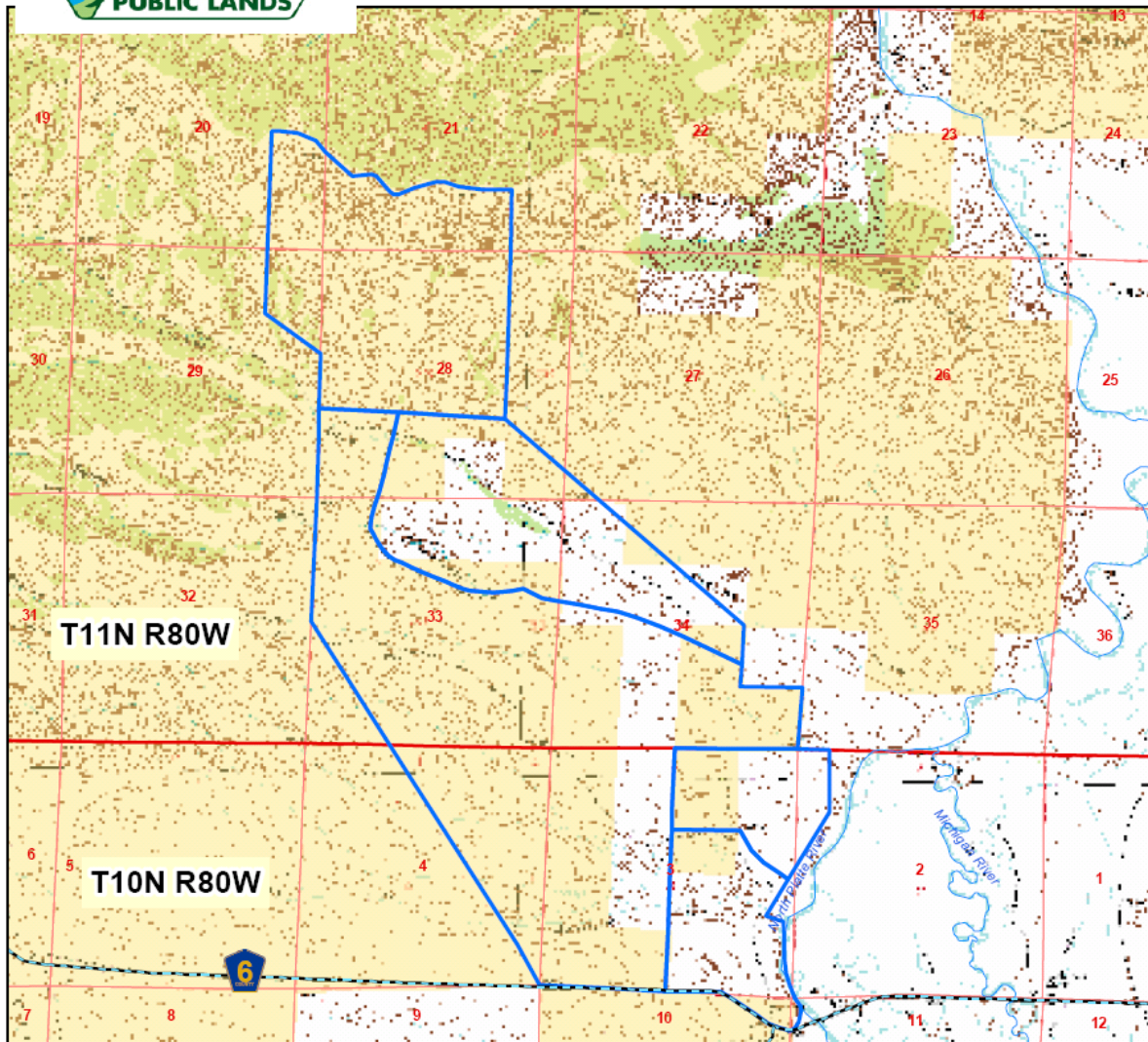
Total AUMs that would be authorized for this permit is 453.

Design Features of the Proposed Action:

- Continue Riparian/Wetland Monitoring- if upward trend is not maintained, adjust management.
- The permittee would be responsible for notifying the BLM of all county listed noxious weeds which result from their livestock grazing operations.
- The BLM would monitor the allotments for further establishment or expansion of invasive, non-native species.
- The BLM would be responsible for implementing control measures, which would include partnership with the Jackson County Weed Abatement Program.



Grazing Allotment 07191



0 0.25 0.5 1 Mile

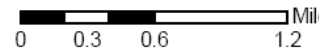
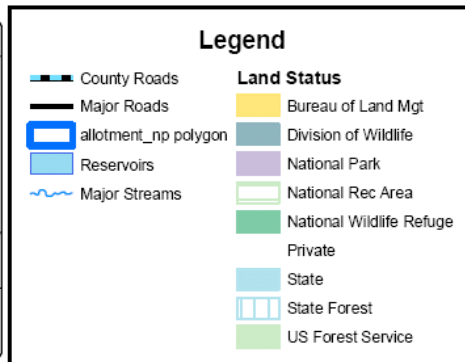
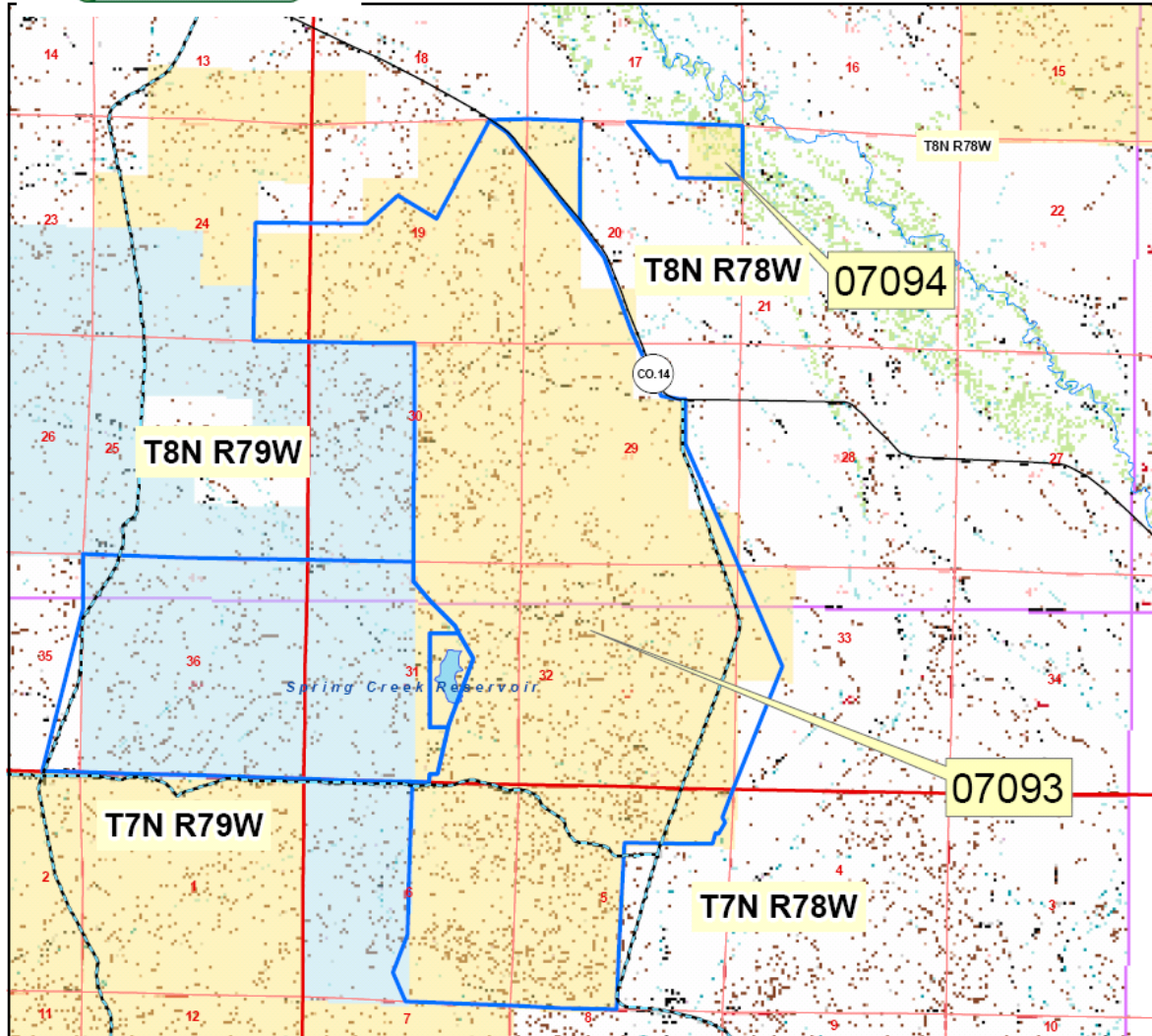
1:37,140

No Warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the Accuracy, Reliability, or Completeness of this Data for Individual Use or Aggregate Use with Other Data.

Maps: Lake John, Cowdrey Independence mtn, Northgate BLM, Kremmling FO 2/2009



Grazing Allotments 07094 and 07093



1:42,239

No Warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the Accuracy, Reliability, or Completeness of this Data for Individual Use or Aggregate Use with Other Data.

Maps: Gould NW Owl Ridge
BLM, Kremmling FO 2/2009

No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would not implement the new changes to the grazing permits. The grazing permit would be renewed under the old permit (1999- 2009) and stipulations.

- The permit would be renewed for 10-years (through February 28, 2019).
- The Standard Terms and Conditions are included in Attachment #2.

The renewed livestock grazing permit would authorize grazing to the following extent for livestock grazing permit #0500149 (Kathleen Moore):

Allotment	Livestock		Season of Use		% Public Land*	AUMs**
	Number	Kind	Begin	End		
Spring Creek 07093	150	C	5/21	7/2	67	142
Leatherman Place 07094	20	C	6/01	9/30	100	80

*% Public Land is the percentage of forage within the public land (BLM) portion of the allotment.

**AUM = animal unit month = amount of forage required to support 1 cow and calf for 1 month.

Total AUMs that would be authorized for this permit is 222.

The renewed livestock grazing permit would authorize grazing to the following extent for livestock grazing permit #0501824 (Willford Ranches):

Allotment	Livestock		Season of Use		% Public Land*	AUMs**
	Number	Kind	Begin	End		
Spring Creek 07093	200	C	6/11	7/12	100	210
Independence Mtn 07191	111	C	5/21	10/15	45	243

*% Public Land is the percentage of forage within the public land (BLM) portion of the allotment.

**AUM = animal unit month = amount of forage required to support 1 cow and calf for 1 month.

Total AUMs that would be authorized for this permit is 453.

Alternatives Considered But Eliminated From Further Analysis:

No livestock grazing was considered but eliminated from further analysis for the following reasons:

- Livestock grazing with the Kremmling Field Office was fully analyzed and authorized in the RMP/EIS as recorded in the 1984 Approved Plan and Record of Decision. At that time a “No Grazing Alternative” was considered but not selected.
- This alternative is not consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) that stated: “the public lands be managed in a manner which recognizes the Nation’s need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from public lands.....”

- During public scoping and staff review there were no issues or concerns identified that would support a “No Grazing Alternative.”

It has been determined that significant progress toward achieving compliance with the Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado would occur with the appropriate livestock grazing guidelines set forth in the Proposed Action

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: Kremmling Resource Management Plan (RMP), Record of Decision (ROD)

Date Approved: December 19, 1984; Updated February 1999

Decision Number/Page: Livestock Grazing: pages 6 and 8, as revised

Decision Language: Objectives of the RMP/ROD include allocation of a base level of livestock forage and maintaining or improving forage production and condition in areas where livestock grazing is a priority or is compatible with the land use priority. The RMP designated the project area with a livestock grazing priority.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITIGATION MEASURES:

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: Any type of soil or vegetation disturbance in an area where non-native, invasive species are established promotes their expansion. Within the Standard Terms and Conditions of their permit, the permittee is responsible for notifying the BLM of all county listed noxious weeds which result from their livestock grazing operations.

Environmental Consequences: Any type of soil or vegetation disturbance in an area where non-native, invasive species are established promotes their expansion. Under the No Action or Proposed Action, impacts are expected to be minimal.

Mitigation: None

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: A variety of migratory bird species, primarily birds of prey and songbirds, use the allotments proposed for renewal. Surveys conducted in 1994 by the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas Partnership recorded many species in the area including Swainson's hawks, red-tailed hawks, golden eagles, green-tailed towhee, mountain and western bluebirds, sage thrasher, horned lark, western kingbirds, American kestrels, and common nighthawks in the sagebrush habitat common to these allotments. Species common in and adjacent the mixed lodgepole and aspen forests include Black-capped Chickadee, Clark's Nutcracker, N. Flicker, Gray Jay, and Northern Goshawk.

Environmental Consequences: Under the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action, allotment 7094 would be renewed without any changes. Since there would be no changes to this allotment, the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action are expected to maintain current conditions for migratory birds. The Proposed Action includes grazing plans for allotments 7191 and 7093 that will help move cattle through the allotments and schedule rest for 7191. Splitting the 7093 allotment reduces the grazing pressure on the common pasture, which should improve forage production and vigor. Increasing the season of use without raising the AUMs should also help the permittee use the pastures during different times of the year, which can benefit vegetation. This would be more beneficial to migratory birds since grass and forb production would likely increase as compared to the continuation of current grazing management. The Proposed Action would provide for better plant vigor and thereby would produce more plant material available for bird use, especially by those species that nest on the ground. The No Action Alternative would be expected to continue the present conditions. This would not be expected to further improve conditions for migratory birds.

Mitigation: None

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE SPECIES (includes a finding on Standard 4)

Affected Environment: A list of threatened, endangered, and candidate species which could inhabit the proposed project area was received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on January 12, 2009. Analysis of this list indicated that no listed species inhabit the allotments included in the proposed grazing permit renewal.

Greater sage-grouse, a BLM-designated Sensitive Species, inhabit all the allotments included in the proposed grazing permit renewal. No sage-grouse strutting grounds (leks) are located within the allotments, however, six leks are located within four miles of the allotments. Each of these allotments include sagebrush habitat which provides suitable nesting cover for sage-grouse. Since research has determined that 80% of sage-grouse hens nest within four miles of the leks where they are bred, nesting is occurring in these allotments. All the allotments also provide early brood rearing habitat for young sage-grouse and allotment #7093 provides critical winter habitat.

Environmental Consequences: Under the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action, allotment 7094 would be renewed without any changes. Since there would be no changes to this allotment, the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action are expected to maintain current conditions for Greater sage-grouse. The Proposed Action includes grazing plans for allotments 7191 and 7093 that will help move cattle through the allotments and schedule rest for 7191. Splitting the 7093 allotment reduces the grazing pressure on the common pasture, which should improve forage production and vigor. Increasing the season of use without raising the AUMs should also help the permittee use the pastures during different times of the year, which can benefit vegetation. This would increase grass and forb productivity in the allotment where sage-grouse nesting and brood rearing habitat occurs. The increase in production would enhance sage-grouse nesting success since more cover would be available to conceal nests from predators and adverse weather. Brood survival would also increase since more cover and food would be available as they migrate to adjacent brood-rearing habitat.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: Allotment 07093 was assessed for standards in 2006 and determined to be meeting Standard 4. Allotment 07191 was also assessed for compliance and was determined to be meeting the standards however much of the area was “functioning at risk”. Allotment 07094 was not assessed for Standards because it is a custodial allotment with no known resource concerns or problems. The Proposed Action will likely improve conditions for allotments 7191 and 7093 as compared to the No Action Alternative. Neither the Proposed Action nor the No Action Alternative would impact allotment 07094.

WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes a finding on Standard 5)

Affected Environment: The grazing permits are for public lands within the North Platte River Basin. Allotment 7094 contains a short segment of Owl Creek and the Michigan River. Allotment 7093 includes most of the public land segments of Spring Creek, which is tributary to

the Illinois River, and Allotment 7191 contains intermittent drainages that are tributary to the North Platte River. Due to wetland conditions in allotment 7191, the BLM felt the Land Health Standard for water quality was not being met.

The 1999 Permit Renewal Environmental Assessments discussed the water quality for the allotments. Allotments 7093 and 7094 were covered in CO-018-99-34EA and Allotment 7191 was covered in CO-018-99-35EA. At the time, the state considered the allotment's streams and their receiving rivers to be meeting the state water quality standards. Since that time, however, the Illinois River has been added to the state's 303(d) List for iron levels. The 2008 305(b) report lists the Illinois River as not supporting coldwater aquatic life- class 1 due to iron levels from mining. Other designated uses were not assessed. Tributaries of the North Platte River contained in allotment 7093 are shown in the 305(b) Report as having insufficient data to assess coldwater aquatic life- class 1 and primary contact recreation uses. There is possible impairment due to "aquatic life use, other, E. coli, and pH". The suspected source is mining. The report is confusing as the mainstem segment is fully supporting all designated reaches, and E. coli is not generally attributable to mining activity. The Illinois River is the only stream associated with these permits that is listed in the 303(d) List or the Monitoring and Evaluation List.

The BLM does not monitor Owl Creek or the Michigan River due to the few public land segments. Some monitoring has occurred on Spring Creek, but the focus has been on riparian conditions, as the rest of the watershed is in fair condition. BLM manages the headwaters of Spring Creek and the drainage has not had any mining activity. Although the iron source could be geologic, from the limited available data, Spring Creek does not appear to be a major contributor. Due to the size of the Illinois River's watershed, it is suspected that other drainages are the iron source. Allotment 7191's drainages are primarily intermittent. Mansfield Draw has the most perennial surface water, but is dammed for livestock water at the lower end prior to joining the North Platte. Only during high runoff events or possibly snowmelt, would surface water from the allotment be expected to reach the North Platte River. There are several perennial tributaries within the designated segment that are more likely measurable contributors to water quality concerns than those within the allotment.

Many of the known groundwater sources within the allotments are developed for livestock water. The developments include protection from contamination by fencing off the sources for springs or proper casing and cementing for wells. Part of the Spring Creek Mire complex is in allotment 7093. The groundwater-fed wetland has multiple spring sources that are grazed. Allotment 7191 is downstream of the Mansfield Draw Mire complex. Only limited ground water quality data exists, but it appears that groundwater meets agricultural uses.

Environmental Consequences: The Proposed Action includes grazing plans for allotments 7191 and 7093. These plans help move cattle through the allotment and schedule rest for allotment 7191 pastures. Splitting the 7093 allotment into two pastures reduces the grazing pressure on the common pasture, which should improve forage production and vigor. Also allotments 7093 and 7191 tend to have higher utilization levels around the wetlands and riparian zones. The grazing plans appear to provide for rotation or rest and lower AUMs to help reduce over utilization in these areas and allow for regrowth. This helps maintain channel shading, reducing stream temperatures, and channel stability, reducing the sediment loads. By increasing forage reducing stream temperatures and improving channel stability, reducing the sediment loads, improving livestock distribution, reducing wetland utilization, and protecting watershed

conditions should help maintain or improve water quality within the allotments. The No Action Alternative would be expected to continue the present conditions. This would not be expected to further improve the allotments or water quality, and depending on the yearly growing conditions, allotments could fail the Standard. Under the Proposed Action and No Action alternative, grazing within allotment 7094 should not impact water quality because only a small portion of the Michigan River is affected by BLM lands.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: The watershed conditions within allotment 7093 and 7191 are considered to be meeting the standard. If additional information indicates that Spring Creek is an iron source to the Illinois River, or that tributaries to the North Platte River do have impaired water quality, then a reassessment would be done to determine if BLM lands are a contributor. If needed, additional management actions would then be implemented. The Proposed Action requires grazing systems that should benefit watershed conditions.

WETLANDS & RIPARIAN ZONES (includes a finding on Standard 2)

Affected Environment: Wetland and riparian conditions are discussed in the 1999 Permit Renewal Environmental Assessments CO-018-99-34EA and CO-018-99-35EA. Since the 1999 permit renewal, the BLM contracted an inventory of fens in North Park. Upper Mansfield Draw (just west of allotment 7093) and Spring Creek's springs (allotment 7093) were both identified as large fen/mire complexes. The very southwest corner of the allotment (S1/2SE1/4 of Section 6) contains at least 8 springs that feed the Spring Creek mire. It is the largest and wettest mire found on public lands in North Park, and the most diverse with 6 of the 9 subclasses of fens. Organic soils are often greater than one meter in depth, and the water chemistry indicates it is a saline variation of a rich fen. During the 2003 fieldwork, the contractors found some areas of cattle impacts to soils and vegetation. Soil conditions varied widely, with severe cattle impacts in the margin habitat but none in the fen interior. Cattle grazing appears to have had negligible effect on vegetation near the BLM border (7093's west edge) and adjacent State land. Since the inventory, the BLM has continued to monitor Mansfield Draw and Spring Creek (mire and creek). Conditions are improving, but utilization levels in some areas are higher than desired.

Environmental Consequences: The Proposed Action continues a multi-pasture grazing system with some scheduled rest in allotment 7191. Since the 1999 renewal, the system and the additional projects that support the system, appear to be improving vegetative conditions in the wetland areas. The wetland/riparian areas are anticipated to continue to improve with the implementation of the new grazing system that provides rest and deferment. The new grazing system should also help improve streambank conditions along Spring Creek within allotment 7093. Spring Creek has already started to improved vegetative cover, with sedges starting to narrow the creek's channel. Continued monitoring of the riparian zone will help insure that the grazing system is maintaining or improving Spring Creek. Under the No Action Alternative, there is a narrower time period to graze allotment 7093. It results in grazing every year at the height of the growing season, and does not promote deferment of the allotment which would not improve wetland/riparian conditions. Under the Proposed Action and No Action alternative, grazing within allotment 7094 should not impact wetlands because only a small portion of the Michigan River is affected by BLM lands.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for riparian systems: The allotments are considered to be meeting the Standard for wetland/riparian systems. The Proposed Action's grazing systems should continue to improve or maintain these resources.

SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: Soils for allotments 7094 and 7093 are discussed in the Environmental Assessment Grazing Permit Renewal CO-018-99-34EA. Since the 1999 assessment, despite the drought period, vegetative conditions have improved on allotment 7093. The 2006 field assessment of a 1999 "failed" area did not observe accelerated soil erosion and interspaces were filling in with grasses and forbs. Allotment 7191 was determined to meet the Standard, but vegetation needed to continue to improve to insure longterm soil protection and health. Livestock continue to use the better vegetated swales and drainages fairly heavily, and adherence to the grazing system was lacking.

Environmental Consequences: The Proposed Action would split allotment 7093 between the two permittees, so that there are no common pastures. The common pasture has had reduced vegetative vigor and production, which places the longterm soil conditions at risk. The new grazing systems will allow pasture deferment and no pasture will be grazed two time/year. This should increase ground cover, reduce soil trampling, and improve nutrient and water cycling in the allotment. Allotment 7191 will have a grazing system that rotates livestock through the allotment and schedules pasture rest. This will not only reduce utilization of key areas, but will also allow for better plant vigor. Rest helps increase plant litter and decreases interspaces, helping reducing soil erosion. The No Action Alternative would limit the season of use for allotment 7093 and continue with a common pasture. The opportunity to continue improvements on allotment 7191 would also be more difficult to achieve.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: The three allotments within the permit are considered to be meeting the Upland Soil Standard. Allotments 7093 and 7191 could still improve to reach their vegetative potential, thereby protecting the longterm soil health on the allotments. The Proposed Action is expected to help these improvements occur.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: Allotments consist mostly of sagebrush steppe vegetation communities. The dominant species is big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) with an understory of perennial cool season grasses and annual and perennial forbs. Within allotments 7093 and 07191, there are 2 large riparian complexes that provide the majority of forage

Environmental Consequences: Under the Proposed action livestock use within grazing allotment 07093 would be adjusted by splitting the allotment. Splitting the allotment will help the vegetation by not allowing both permittees the ability to graze all pastures. This will reduce potential livestock grazing conflicts the following year while improving the vegetation vigor and

health. Under the No action alternative the allotment would continue to be grazed with one pasture be grazed twice and all pastures would be grazed by both permittees. This grazing system would not allow for re-growth in the pasture being grazed twice. It also allows for potential overgrazing because the current year permittee would not be in the same pastures the following year. This can cause reduced vigor and plant health for the other permittee the following year. Allotment 07191 would implement a grazing system that rotates cattle through 5 pastures. Most years rest will be provided to one pasture. This type of grazing systems provides a good opportunity to improve vegetation vigor and health over time. Under the No Action Alternative, there would be less chance to improve the vegetation vigor and health. Under the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative, the season of use or AUMs will not change for allotment 07094. Since there would be no changes to this allotment, the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action are expected to maintain current conditions for vegetation.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial): Allotments 07093 and 07191 were assessed for standards in 2006. Allotment 7191 was determined to be meeting standards however much of the vegetation was “Functioning at Risk”. Allotment 07093 was determined to be meeting standards.

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: A variety of intermittent and perennial water bodies are located in the allotments included in the proposed grazing permit renewal. These water bodies include drainage bottoms, stock ponds, Owl Creek, the Michigan River, Spring Creek, and several small spring-fed perennial drainages. These waters support aquatic wildlife, primarily waterbirds, beaver, and muskrats during wet periods. The Michigan River supports coldwater fish such as brook trout, minnows, dace and suckers.

Environmental Consequences: Under the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action, allotment 7094 would be renewed without any changes. Since there would be no changes to this allotment, the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action are expected to maintain current conditions for aquatic wildlife. The Proposed Action includes grazing plans for allotments 7191 and 7093 that will help move cattle through the allotments and schedule rest for 7191. Splitting the 7093 allotment reduces the grazing pressure on the common pasture, which should improve forage production and vigor. Increasing the season of use without raising the AUMs should also help the permittee use the pastures during different times of the year, which can benefit vegetation. This would be more beneficial to aquatic wildlife since grass and forb production would likely increase and riparian areas would improve as compared to the No Action Alternative. The Proposed Action will also help maintain channel shading, reducing stream temperatures, and channel stability, reducing the sediment loads and benefiting the aquatic wildlife.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial): Allotment 07093 was assessed for standards in 2006 and determined to be meeting Standard 3. Allotment 07191 was also assessed for compliance and was determined to be meeting the standards however much of the area was “functioning at risk”.

Allotment 07094 was not assessed for Standards because it is a low priority allotment with no known resource concerns or problems. The Proposed Action will likely improve conditions for allotments 7191 and 7093 as compared to the No Action Alternative. Neither the Proposed Action nor the No Action Alternative would impact allotment 07094.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: These allotments provide habitat for a variety of upland wildlife. Mule deer, pronghorn antelope, moose and Rocky Mountain elk occupy the area at different times of the year while badgers, coyotes, red foxes, white-tailed jackrabbits, and a variety of small rodents live in the allotments on a year-long basis. Pronghorn antelope and mule deer primarily use the allotments during the summer while elk use the allotments in the winter. Moose concentrate along the Michigan River throughout the year.

Environmental Consequences: Under the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action, allotment 7094 would be renewed without any changes. Since there would be no changes to this allotment, the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action are expected to maintain current conditions for terrestrial wildlife. The Proposed Action includes grazing plans for allotments 7191 and 7093 that will help move cattle through the allotments and schedule rest for 7191. Splitting the 7093 allotment reduces the grazing pressure on the common pasture, which should improve forage production and vigor. Increasing the season of use without raising the AUMs should also help the permittee use the pastures during different times of the year, which can benefit vegetation. This would be more beneficial to terrestrial wildlife since grass and forb production would likely increase as compared to the No Action Alternative. This additional vegetation would be especially important to wildlife that use the allotment during winter.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): Allotment 07093 was assessed for standards in 2006 and determined to be meeting Standard 3. Allotment 07191 was also assessed for compliance and was determined to be meeting the standards however much of the area was “functioning at risk”. Allotment 07094 was not assessed for Standards because it is a low priority allotment with no known resource concerns or problems. The Proposed Action will likely improve conditions for allotments 7191 and 7093 as compared to the No Action Alternative. Neither the Proposed Action nor the No Action Alternative would impact allotment 07094.

RANGE MANAGEMENT:

Affected Environment: Allotment 07191 is permitted for 243 AUMs. Allotment 07093 is permitted for 80 AUMs and allotment 07093 is permitted for 142 AUMs. Livestock use within allotment 07093 has been grazed in common for the last 10 years. This has provided both permittees the ability to graze all pastures within the allotment with one pasture being grazed twice by both permittees. Allotment 07191 has had numerous range improvement constructed over the last 10 years to help improve livestock distribution. Livestock use within these allotments has not changed significantly since the 1999 permit renewal.

Environmental Consequences: Under the proposed action, two new grazing systems would be implemented. The grazing system associated with allotment 07093 would split the allotment so there would be no more common use. This should benefit both permittees as they

can better tract the vegetation use within the allotment. This also would help both permittees know the condition of their range improvements. Under the No Action alternative, allotment 07093 would continue to be grazed as in the past. This system has worked but has caused some conflicts between permittees over potential range improvement maintenance responsibilities. Allotment 07191 would implement a grazing system due to completion of many range projects. These improvements should help the permittee improve the land and better control his livestock. Under the No Action alternative, livestock control and movement would not be achieved as livestock could be placed all over the allotment. Under the Proposed Action and No Action alternative, there would be no change or impacts to allotment 07094.

Mitigation: None

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: Livestock grazing has been an important use of the public lands in the Kremmling Field Office since the introduction of domestic livestock in the 1870s. Presently, the Field Office supports a grazing program on approximately 378,000 acres of BLM-administered public lands. Currently, these public ranges are licensed at a level of approximately 39,726 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) for livestock.

For the purpose of this EA, the general geographic boundary for cumulative impact analysis is North Park. Lands administered by the Kremmling Field Office are divided North to South by the Continental Divide. The public lands to the north of the divide are generally referred to as North Park, and those to the south of the divide, Middle Park. In North Park, there are approximately 260,000 acres of BLM-administered public lands that are currently being grazed, and 26,656 AUMs that are licensed.

In looking at past actions within the geographic area over the past ten years, there have not been any major changes to the North Park allotments. A majority of the allotments have been assessed for standards and the permits modified when needed due to non-compliance with specific standards or new information that has been received (i.e. new sage grouse lek). A BLM interdisciplinary Team (IDT) assessed two allotments for compliance with the Colorado Public Land Health Standards, and both allotments met standards.

In looking at reasonably foreseeable actions, the Coalmont area in southern Jackson County has seen recent interest in oil and gas development. There is a potential this activity could have a cumulative impact on North Park allotments in the future depending upon the extent of development. Other reasonably foreseeable actions that are projected to occur include minor range improvement projects.

In terms of cumulative impacts to cultural resources, grazing may cause substantial ground disturbance and cause cumulative, long term, irreversible adverse effects to historic properties throughout the Kremmling Field Office. However, as part of the BLM permit renewal process, allotments are being assessed and inventoried for cultural resources. If resources are found and eligible for NRHP, mitigation is implemented. This process is attempting to mitigate any major cumulative impacts to cultural resources in the Kremmling Field Office.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED: Starting in February 2008, a scoping process was begun to request information concerning the renewal of grazing permits/leases and to prioritize

areas or allotments with issues and concerns. The Field Office sent scoping letters, along with land status maps showing the affected allotments, to the following groups and agencies: Colorado Division of Wildlife (Steamboat, Walden, Hot Sulphur Springs, Ft Collins); District Board of Grazing Advisors; County Commissioners (Grand, Jackson); Stock Growers (Middle Park, North Park, Upper Big Laramie River Ranch Assoc.); Northwest Resource Advisory Council; United States Forest Service (Silverthorne, Granby, Walden); US Fish and Wildlife Service (Arapaho Wildlife Refuge); Tribal Councils (Arapaho, Shoshone, Southern Ute); Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs; Ute Indian Tribe Uintah & Ouray Agency Business Committee; Colorado Environmental Coalition; Colorado State Land Board.

The BLM Colorado State Office also mailed outreach letters, concerning the renewal of grazing permits/leases, to all Congressional offices, State and Federal agencies, and major environmental, conservation, and user group organizations.

In addition, individual letters were sent to the affected permittees/lessees informing them that their permit/lease was up for renewal and requested any information they wanted included in, or taken into consideration, during the renewal process. A Notice of Public Scoping was posted on the Internet, at the Colorado BLM home page, asking for public input on permit/lease renewals and the assessment of public land health standards within the Field Office. This notice was followed up in October with an Internet posting of the Field Office prioritization of allotments and a determination as to which allotments would be assessed according to the land health standards. The proposed project was also posted on the Kremmling Internet NEPA Register.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED: See Appendix 2 for Tribal List.

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW: See IDT-RRC in Appendix 1.

FONSI

DOI-BLM-CO-120-2009-0037-EA

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, I have determined that the Proposed Action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.

DECISION RECORD

DECISION: It is my decision to authorize the Proposed Action (see Attachment #3 and 4 for new grazing plans for allotment # 0709s and 07191) as described in the attached EA and renew livestock grazing permits # 0500149 and 0501824 until February 28, 2019. The new permits will be subject to the mitigation measures included below.

RATIONALE: The proposed action was chosen because it would result in better livestock distribution, improve vegetative vigor and overall cover, protect watershed conditions, produce more plant material available for bird use, especially by those species that nest on the ground, and improve habitat conditions for sage-grouse.

When a livestock grazing permit/lease expires, it is subject to renewal at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior for a period of up to ten years. Livestock grazing, when properly managed in accordance with good rangeland ecology practices, has been proven to result in improved land health. The public benefits from public lands which are maintained in a healthy condition and are able to produce sustainable resources for a variety of uses.

The livestock producer benefits from a renewed livestock grazing permit/lease to graze forage on BLM managed land. Livestock grazing on BLM managed land is an integral part of the livestock producer's operation, and an important part of local rural economies.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

Cultural:

-A Class III field inventory will be completed within the ten-year expiration period of the grazing permit. Mitigation would be identified and implemented in consultation with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) if historic properties are located during the subsequent field inventory and if BLM determines that grazing activities would adversely impact the properties.

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING: Compliance with the renewed livestock grazing permit and its associated terms and conditions will be accomplished through the Kremmling Field Office Range Management Program. Livestock grazing will be monitored by the range staff and other

area personnel, as appropriate, to ensure compliance. The Kremmling Field Office Range Monitoring Plan will be used to schedule periodic utilization checks, collect trend data, and evaluate allotment condition. When activity plans have been developed covering an allotment, monitoring methods and schedules included in them will be applied to the allotment. Changes will be made to the permit, based on monitoring, when changes are determined necessary to further protect land health.

NAME OF PREPARER: Peter Torma

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Susan Cassel

DATE: 3/20/09

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

DATE SIGNED:

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1). Livestock grazing permits # 0500149 and 0501824
- 2). Standard Term and Conditions
- 3). Grazing plan for allotment # 07093
- 4). Grazing plan for allotment # 07191

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Interdisciplinary Team Analysis Review Record and Checklist
Appendix 2 – Bibliography (if citations are used)

Appendix 1

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM ANALYSIS REVIEW RECORD AND CHECKLIST:

Project Title: Permit Renewal Willford Moore

Project Leader: Peter Torma

Date Proposal Received: (Only for external proposals)

Date Submitted for Comment: 2/9/2009

Due Date for Comments: 4/15/2009

Need for a field Exam: (If so, schedule a date/time)

Scoping Needs/Interested or Affected Publics: (Identify public scoping needs)

Consultation/Permit Requirements:

Consultation	Date Initiated	Date Completed	Responsible Specialist/ Contractor	Comments
Cultural/Archeological Clearance/SHPO	2/10/2009	2/10/2009	BBW	Past actions have resulted in a cultural resource inventory to determine if those actions would cause potential adverse affects to known and unknown cultural resources sites from livestock grazing, motorized travel, and recreational use. When project undertakings are identified a cultural resource inventory would be conducted to determine if sites are present and their eligibility, project effects, and mitigation requirements if necessary.
Native American	2/10/2009	2/10/2009	BBW	
T&E Species/FWS	N/A	N/A	MM	
Permits Needed (i.e. Air or Water)	N/A	N/A	PB	

(NP) = Not Present

(NI) = Resource/Use Present but Not Impacted

(PI) = Potentially Impacted and Brought Forward for Analysis.

NP NI PI	Discipline/Name	Date Review Comp.	Initials	Review Comments (required for Critical Element NIs, and for elements that require a finding but are not carried forward for analysis.)
CRITICAL ELEMENTS				
NI	Air Quality Belcher	2/27/09	PB	There are no impacts to air quality.
NP	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern Cassel	3/20/09	SC	There are no Areas of Critical Environmental Concern in the proximity of the proposed project area.
NI	Cultural Resources Wyatt	2/10/2009	BBW	Past actions have resulted in a cultural resource inventory to determine if those actions would cause potential adverse affects to known and unknown cultural resources sites from livestock grazing, motorized travel, and recreational use. When project undertakings are identified a

				cultural resource inventory would be conducted to determine if sites are present and their eligibility, project effects, and mitigation requirements if necessary.
NP	Environmental Justice Cassel	3/10/09	SC	According to the most recent Census Bureau statistics (2000), there are no minority or low income communities within the Kremmling Planning Area.
NP	Farmlands, Prime and Unique Belcher	2/27/09	PB	There are no farmlands, prime or unique, in the proximity of the proposed project area.
NI	Floodplains Belcher	2/27/09	PB	Public lands within allotment 7094 contain a portion of the Michigan River floodplain. Renewal of the permit, however, does not affect its functionality nor increase flood hazard.
NP	Invasive, Non-native Species Johnson Torma Scott	2/11/2009	MS	See Analysis
PI	Migratory Birds McGuire	3/4/2009	MM	See Analysis.
NI	Native American Religious Concerns Wyatt	2/10/2009	BBW	Consultation was completed for the original allotment renewal. Future undertakings would require tribal consultation to identify traditional cultural properties.
PI	T/E, and Sensitive Species (Finding on Standard 4) McGuire	3/4/2009	MM	See Analysis.
NP	Wastes, Hazardous and Solid Hodgson	2/23/09	KH	There are no quantities of wastes, hazardous or solid, located on BLM-administered lands in the proposed project area, and there would be no wastes generated as a result of the Proposed Action or No Action alternative.
PI	Water Quality, Surface and Ground (Finding on Standard 5) Belcher	3/2/09	PB	See the Water Quality Section.
PI	Wetlands & Riparian Zones (Finding on Standard 2) Belcher	3/2/09	PB	Impacts are discussed in the Wetlands & Riparian Zones Section
NP	Wild and Scenic Rivers Stout			There are no eligible Wild and Scenic River segments in the proposed project area.
NP	Wilderness Monkouski	3/7/09	JJM	There is no designated Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas in the proximity of the proposed project area.
NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS (A finding must be made for these elements)				
PI	Soils (Finding on Standard 1) Belcher	3/2/09	PB	See the Soil Section of this document.
PI	Vegetation (Finding on Standard 3) Johnson Torma Scott	3/6/09	PT	See vegetation section
PI	Wildlife, Aquatic (Finding on Standard 3) McGuire	3/4/2009	MM	See Analysis.
PI	Wildlife, Terrestrial (Finding on Standard 3) McGuire	3/4/2009	MM	See Analysis.
OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS				
NI	Access/Transportation Monkouski	3/7/09	JJM	The allotments within the proposed action are within an area identified as 'Open' in the 1984 RMP. No decisions were made with the 1988 Off Road Vehicle Implementation Plan for these areas. Access/Transportation would not change under the proposed action or no action alternatives. No impacts.
NI	Forest Management K. Belcher	3/20/09	PT	Grazing would not impact Forest Management

					within the proposed action as there is only a few small stands of Aspen located within allotment 07191.
NI	Geology and Minerals	Hodgson	2/23/09	KH	No impact.
NP	Fire	Wyatt	2/10/2009	BBW	Grazing would reduce light flashy fuels.
NI	Hydrology/Water Rights	Belcher	3/2/09	PB	Potential impacts or concerns are discussed in the Water Quality, Soils, and Wetland Sections of this document. There are no impacts to water rights.
NI	Paleontology	Rupp	3/20/09	FR	No impacts to fossil resources from renewing permit, or the no action alternative. Proposed ground disturbing projects will be reviewed on a project by project basis to determine the need for paleontological inventory.
NI	Noise	Monkouski	3/7/09	JJM	No impacts.
PI	Range Management	Johnson Torma Scott	3/6/09	PT	See Range Section
NI	Lands/ Realty Authorizations	Cassel	2/9/2009	SC	There are no leases or permits in the location of the proposed action. There are several ROW's: COC-8482 to Mountain Parks Electric; COC-23993 to CenturyTel of Eagle; COC-66125 to Forest Service for a weather station and COD-014654 for a reservoir issued to the allottee. There would be no impact to these ROW's with the proposed action or the no action alternatives.
NI	Recreation	Monkouski Windsor	3/7/09	JJM	Under the proposed action no impacts would occur to recreational opportunities that include fishing, camping, hunting, hiking, and watching wildlife.
NI	Socio-Economics	Cassel	3/20/09	SC	Since there would be no change in AUMs, there would be no socio-economic impacts.
NP	Visual Resources	Windsor	3/20/09	AW	The Proposed Action and No Action Alternative would not impact visual resources.
PI	Cumulative Impact Summary	Cassel	3/20/09	SC	See Analysis
FINAL REVIEW					
	P&E Coordinator	Cassel			